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THE DIFFERENCE.
I know two friends, as much alike
As ever you saw two stumps;
And no philosopher could find
A difference in their bumps.

One took a paper, and his life
Was happier than a king's;
His children all can read and write,
And talk of men and things.

The other took no paper, and
While strolling through the wood,
A tree fell down upon his crown,
And killed him as it should.

Had he been reading of the news,
At home like neighbor Jim,
He'd not a cent the accident
Would not have happened him.

From the Southern Literary Messenger.
OLD CROSS-FIRE.
A Story of the North-Western Border.

BY S. N. KERNAN.

Within five minutes after the arrival
of Elliott, every living being in the set-
tlement was collected within the stock-
ade fort at Wheeling. The story of the
youth was told in a few words.

"This is a distressing affair," said Col.
Zane, the commandant of the garrison.
"It is fortunate, however, that Major
McCulloch is with us to-day. Twelve
mounted men under his command will
capture the copper-colored rascals before
sunset, and restore the dear child to an
unharmful. What say you, Major Mc-
Culloch?"

"I am always ready, sir, for any thing
in the shape of an Indian fight," replied
the intrepid hunter.

"Then select twelve men—myself among
the number—mount us on the
fleetest horses we can find, and—but I
need not tell you more. Time is pre-
cious. You pick the men, and I go now
to get the horses in readiness."

"It shall be done," answered McCul-
loch, "and quickly too! Lewis Wetzel!

"Here!" replied Lewis, as he elbowed
his way through the group of persons
that had collected around the major.

"I put you at the head of the list, and
will expect much from you," continued
McCulloch.

"Major Mac," said Wetzel, "I don't
like the Colonel's plan, any way I can
sift it through. I suppose we all want
to have the child fetch back safe and sound,
but I know very well the thing can't be
done according to the Colonel's plan."

"Why not?" respectfully inquired Mc-
Culloch, who reposed almost unbounded
confidence in the judgment and skill of
Lewis Wetzel.

"Because the very minute Old Cross-
Fire finds himself!"

"Old Cross-Fire!" exclaimed a dozen
voices at once.

"Old Cross-Fire!" repeated Wetzel,
with rather a sneering emphasis, "he's
at the top and bottom of this business;
and the very minute he finds himself
hunted down by horsemen, he will scalp
poor Rose, and then take good care to
kill himself and his cursed red-skin gang
beside him's way."

"But how do you cross the Indian
gang to be Old Cross-Fire?" asked
McCulloch.

"Why, you see, Major Mac, I jest
tuck the trouble, a-bit ago, to pick out
the bullet that was lodged in Elliott's
horse. Here it is. I know the size of
the old rascal's balls too well to be mis-
taken."

"Perhaps you are right," said McCul-
loch, after he had examined the shape-
less piece of lead.

"There's nary doubt about it," replied
Wetzel.

"I don't like that, neither," said Mc-
Culloch, "I agree with you that it is not
prudent to go mounted. We will all go on
foot."

"I don't like that, neither," said Mc-
Culloch, "I agree with you that it is not
prudent to go mounted. We will all go on
foot."

"How many do you think will be suf-
ficient for the purpose?" inquired the
major.

"Two, at the outside," returned Mc-
Culloch; "for if the Colonel's agreed, I'll go
myself."

"That will never do!" exclaimed sev-
eral.

"I tell you, Lewis," said Elliott, who
stepped boldly up to the hunter, "what I
shall go at all hazards. It was through
my indiscretion that Miss Mason fell in-
to the hands of the Indians, and no power
under the sun shall prevent me from
aiding in her rescue!"

"Don't talk so fast," observed the im-
perturbable scout—"just let me fix the
thing, Elliott."

"Wetzel," said McCulloch, "too much
may be risked by sending out an ineffic-
ient force. Here comes the Colonel; we
will hear what he has to say about it."

The Colonel, who now repaired to an-
nounce that the horses were forthcom-
ing, had Wetzel's objection to the origi-
nal plan, and his desire to take the mat-
ter into his own hands, fully explained to
him.

"What can you do by yourself?" asked
the Colonel of Wetzel.

"Why, Colonel, I will do all that I
can. I'll get the poor child out of their
red paws, if I have to follow the skulking
dogs all the way to the Sandusky
towns."

"But you shall have help," remarked
the Colonel.

"Colonel, you ain't a gitting jubous of
me, I hope, at this late day? Did you
ever know Lewis Wetzel to net the fool
when red-skins were about? Now, if
we want to fetch back Rose, we must go
about the business like true Indian
hunters—not like fox hunters."

"Do you think you can bring back the
child in safety, Lewis?" seriously asked
Col. Zane.

"I can't promise, naturally, Colonel; but
I know full well that I can do more to-
wards it by myself than I can with a pack
of noisy fellows along with me."

"Wetzel is right," said the Colonel, af-
ter he had revolved the question in his
mind. "In an affair of this kind, I never
found him wrong. Major McCulloch,
we will commit the business to him
alone."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Colo-
nel," exclaimed Wetzel, whose eyes
now suddenly brightened with hope and
joy—"I'll give good account of myself."

"I shall go with you, Lewis," said El-
liott, impatiently—"I will go at the risk
of my life!"

"So you may," replied the hunter;
"you will do no harm. You won't be
harmless, because you're a green hand,
and will have to do just as I tell you—
Besides, you ought to help Rose out of
the bad box your father got her into."

"Where do you propose going?" asked
Col. Zane.

"Straight to the mouth of Short creek;
that's the pint Old Cross-Fire always
crosses at. It's gitting for now in the
afternoon, so we'll have to be brisk—
Elliott, is your rifle and all your fixings in
good order?"

"All right," responded the youth.

"Then, come, let's be off."

The two adventurers shouldered their
firelocks, and as they passed through the
gate of the fortification, many a brief
prayer for their success was uttered by
the inmates of the fort; all of whom had
been deeply interested auditors of the
conversation above related. They pur-
sued a well beaten path four or five miles
up the bank of the river, until they reach-
ed the mouth of a large run, which em-
ptied itself into the Ohio, immediately op-
posite a small island in the latter stream.
Here, nature appeared, in her wildest as-
pect.

"This is a suspicious looking place,"
observed Elliott.

"Not a bit," said Wetzel. "There
hain't been an Indian here for a long time.
A good while back it was a famous place
for them to cross over in their canoes;
and many's the time I've laid for days
and nights at a stretch, on the point of
that little island yonder, watching the move-
ments of the red-skins to get a chance to
riddle their hides with my old woman
here,"—and the hunter patted the breech
of his gun with manifest affection.

"Old Cross-Fire," he continued, "used to pad-
dle over herabouts; but me and him
have had so many cracks at each other,

along yander, that he's got scared to
visit his old hide in this quarter any
more. He's got his ferry at Short creek,
now; and there's where we'll have to
nail him."

"Do you think the old fellow himself
carried off Rose?" inquired Elliott.

"Just as sure as he did as my name's
Lewis Wetzel."

"Then, Lewis, I am resolved that my
rifle shall kill the infernal scoundrel!"
"Put up, Elliott! Do just as I tell you;
I didn't fetch you along to talk that way.
Boy there's nary man in this part of the
universe that I'd trust with Old Cross-
Fire."

"But if a fair chance should offer, Lewis,
is why may I not as well pull at him?"
"Because it wouldn't be of no use, at
all; for it runs strong in my head that
powder and lead can't kill him. My old
woman here has tried so often to hush
his jaw without doing it, that I've made
up my mind to try him some other way.
He's got a charmed life—that's a clear
case!"

"Fudge, Lewis! Do you believe in
such old woman's stories?"

"Well, I don't know that I do, as a
general thing; but I must say that I've
satisfied myself that Old Cross-Fire is
proof again rifle balls, my how. But we
must move along quicker, Elliott. We're
only half way to Short creek, and we
hain't a minute's time to spare."

"I can keep up with you—move along,"
said the youth.

"It is high time to quit talking, now,"
observed the older hunter in a softened
tone, after they had left the run some in
their rear. "A body has to be quiet
when he gets about the Indians, or they'll
be mighty apt to get about him."

Elliott promised to keep silence. The
two hunters now quickened their pace,
though care was taken to bring their
feet to the ground as lightly as possible.
Wetzel, who walked before his youthful
companion, continually glanced his well-
practised eyes around him, penetrating
the tangles of the forest on every side.
He moved with surprising stillness, and
never uttered a syllable, unless it might
have been to check his comrade for mak-
ing unnecessary noise.

When the hunters reached the mouth
of Short creek, the sun was nearly ready
to disappear behind the bold heights on
the opposite shore of the Ohio. The
banks of the creek, at its confluence with
the river, were abrupt, though not high,
and covered even to their extreme bor-
ders with a luxuriant growth of paw-
paws. The outer edge of each of
either stream was dry and sandy; but a
wide strip of wet and mucous earth next
to the water's edge, had been exposed
to view by the recent subsidence of a
freshet.

"This is the end of our tramp," whis-
pered Wetzel to his companion. They
were then standing at the lower angle of
the junction of the streams—screened,
however, from observation by the thick
pawpaw growth which extended to the
verge of the precipice.

"What is to be done now?" asked the
youth in a low whisper.

"I'll see," said Wetzel. "You stay
where you are, and do not budge a peg,
nor make a bit of noise, while I go and
look round a little."

He cautiously drew the branches aside
and glided through the bushes with a
quietness peculiar to the skillful Indian
hunter. After an absence of several
minutes he returned, and made a signal
to Elliott to follow him. The latter
stepped forward as cautiously as he
could, and accompanied Lewis a few rods
up the creek bank, when the elder hunter
called the attention of his companion to
the stumps of two bushes, on which the
recent marks of the hatchet were visible.

"This one," whispered Wetzel, stoop-
ing down to the nearer stump, "was cut
by Old Cross-Fire himself."

"How do you know that?" inquired
Elliott.

"Can't you see that it was cut by a
left-handed man? The highest point of
the stump is always where the heel of
the hatchet cuts it; and that high point is
next to this stump, and on the left side."

"I understand you," said the youth—
"Your reasoning is conclusive; that the
hatch was cut by a left-handed man."

"Now look at the other stump," re-
sumed Wetzel, "and give me your idea
about that."

Elliott carefully examined the second
stump, and ventured his opinion promptly.

"This one," said he, "was cut by a
right-handed man, because the highest
point of the stump is on the right side."

"That's right, Elliott. I've hain't you
that much, and it's worth minding too."

"Why is the information so valua-
ble?"

at least two red-skins here—one left-
handed and one right-handed one. The
left-handed one is Old Cross-Fire, be-
cause he's the only left-handed man I
know of in these parts; and the other, I
judge, is one of his hangers-on."

"But might there not have been more
than two, Lewis?"

"So there might, but we can't tell,"
said Wetzel, as he moved near the bank
and cast his keen eyes upon the bosom
of the water. "There's another discov-
ery I've made," he added. "Do you see
that little green twig in the creek there?"

Elliott glanced his eye in the direction
denoted by his comrade's finger, and
answered in the affirmative.

"Well, Elliott, that little twig is fast to
Old Cross-Fire's canoe, which is there
sunk in the water; and I argue that those
bushes here were cut to make for to
fasten it to the bottom."

"Very likely," said Elliott.

"And I now argue that there might
have been one or more Indians taking
care of the canoe, while the old dog and
his pup come ashore to cut the forks."

"You reason like a philosopher, Lewis.
I will soon become an expert hunter,
under your tutorage."

"Now, Elliott," said the scout, "you go
back to the old place and keep quiet,
and have a bright look-out, while I slip
around the point of that hill and see what's
going on. Only be quiet, and do as I
tell you. I'll be back before you get
uneasy."

The two hunters separated; Elliott to
seek his original cover, and the other to
obtain some information of the expected
enemy. The former examined the pri-
mings of his gun, and satisfied himself
that every thing was in proper order for
service. He seated himself upon the
ground, and kept remarkably quiet—bus-
ying his mind, most of the time, in fan-
cying the situation of Rose. Sometimes
he was ready to conclude that she had
fallen a victim to savage cruelty, but he
endeavored to dispel such gloomy ideas
from his mind, and contemplate only the
brighter side of the picture. He was
unhappy, however, in spite of his efforts
to restore his spirits to their wonted
buoyancy. In the midst of his medita-
tions, he felt something strike him upon
the shoulder from behind. He sprang
upon his feet and discovered Wetzel
standing near him.

"Is well I didn't see an Indian," said the
latter.

Elliott was much mortified to think
that he had allowed himself to be surpris-
ed so easily.

"Lewis, you have learned me another
lesson," said he, "and I shall profit by it."

"See that you do," replied Wetzel, in a
low voice. "You must be quiet now,"
he added in a whisper.

"Did you see anything?" asked El-
liott.

"Yes; they're coming!"

"Who?"

"Old Cross-Fire and three others."

"And Rose?"

"She's safe enough, riding the little
white pony, and Old Cross-Fire is lead-
ing it alone."

"Lewis, I'll shoot the impudent scound-
rel if I die for it!" muttered the youth;
and he clenched his teeth with rage.

"Hush, Elliott, hush!—do as I tell you,
and all will be well. Crouch down as
low as you can, and be quiet."

"The old red-skin wretch!" growled
the young hunter.

"Be easy, boy," said Wetzel; "he is
not to be shot, I tell you. I'll attend to
him. Elliott, you are getting feverish; I
see it on your face. Keep cool—Keep
cool—or you can never shoot to kill."

The eye of Wetzel was quick to per-
ceive that his youthful comrade was la-
boring under some nervous excitement,
occasioned by the novelty and probable
danger of the situation in which he was
placed.

"I'll be cool presently," he replied.

"Only do as I tell you, Elliott. Lay
low, and draw your breath easy; and
don't whisper another word, as you val-
ue your life, and Rose's too."

Some time elapsed before either made
the slightest motion. At length, the
tramping of the pony, approaching the
creek, was distinctly heard; and Elliott
made a motion towards raising his head
to obtain a sight of Rose, but his purpose
was promptly thwarted by the brawny
arm of his companion, who breathed, in-
stead of whispering, in his ear, his favor-
ite injunction, "be quiet!"

Wetzel's head was placed behind a
cluster of green leaves, through the inter-
stices of which he was enabled to obtain
a view of the shore of the creek, opposite
the place where the canoe was sunk. He
observed Old Cross-Fire conduct the po-
ney to the margin of the bank at which
place he lifted the captive to the ground.
The scolding of Rose at this time was
quite audible. As the sounds fell upon

Elliott's ear, he trembled with emotion;
and might have infringed Wetzel's order,
had not the latter, anticipating something
of the kind, turned his face towards him,
and frowned him into silence.

Old Cross-Fire, seeing no store upon
Rose's saddle, merely stripped the poney
of its bridle, which he slapped across the
animal's back, and, with a second swing,
threw it upon the beach below him. The
poney entered into the bushes, where it
soon commenced feeding upon the wild
grass at his feet. In another moment,
the Indians had lifted Rose down the de-
clivity, and their whole party appeared
on the beach. Two of them waded into
the creek as far as the twig which had
been observed by Wetzel, where they
plunged their arms into the water, and
drew forth a wooden fork. Their canoe
immediately rose to the surface. Dexte-
rously throwing out the water it contained,
they pushed it to the shore, where Old
Cross-Fire and the other warrior had
remained to stand guard over Rose. The
four captives were then placed in the bow
of the canoe; one of the Indians seated
himself about its centre; whilst another
drew forth a paddle and stood erect in the
stern, and pushed off. The old chief and
one Indian remained on the beach, proba-
bly to await the return of the canoe.

All of these motions were distinctly ob-
served by Wetzel, who quickly natu-
rally his own plans. The moment the
canoe was pushed off he made signs to
be in readiness.

"Aim!" said he, in a scarcely audible
whisper, "at the fellow in the middle of
the canoe. Put directly at his body, and
don't pull till I give the word."

Elliott directed the muzzle of his gun
towards the water, and just then had first
view of the enemy. The sight of Rose
highly disconcerted him; but summon-
ing all his manly energies into action, he
cocked his rifle and took accurate aim at
the designated object. Wetzel, mean-
while, graduated his piece in nearly the
same line of sight; and, at the instant
the canoe reached the mouth of the creek,
he gave the word, in a clear whisper—
"Pull!"

Both rifles fired at precisely the same
moment, blended their reports so admir-
ably, that the ear could not have distin-
guished two separate discharges. Both
Indians fell: the one in the centre of the
canoe dropped on its bottom; but the other,
who had been standing upright in the
stern, capsize the canoe in falling over.

This was a contrivance which Wetzel
had, perhaps, not contemplated. He was
prompt, however, in meeting it.

"Plunge in!" he whispered to Elliott,
who had already made up his mind to do
so, regardless of consequences. The
youth dropped his rifle, and at one bound
was over the bank, and at another in the
water. He plied his limbs with almost
super-human strength. A shot was fired
on the shore, but he scarcely heard it, so
eagerly was he bent upon saving Rose
from the frightful death by which she was
threatened. For a short period after Rose
had been thrown into the water, her dress
bayed her upon its surface. Gradually,
however, it became saturated with the
element, and in turn exercised an oppo-
site influence. She was nearly exhaust-
ed when Elliott came to her relief. The
youth brought the unconscious girl to the
shore, and placed her in a position adapted
to restore animation.

Before Elliott had swam far from the
shore, Lewis Wetzel, with a celebrity of
motion peculiar to himself, had reloaded
his rifle, and stealthily placed himself at
the edge of the precipice, nearly over the
two Indians who yet remained on the
beach. The comrade of Old Cross-Fire
had already raised his gun to his shoulder,
to fire at Elliott, when Wetzel gained
his new position. The rapid motion of
the youth, however, plunging his way
through the water, somewhat baffled the
expectant and before he had time to draw
a satisfactory sight upon the swimmer, a
ball from Lewis Wetzel's rifle pierced the
Mingo's heart. At this moment, Old
Cross-Fire was standing near his com-
panion; his keen black eyes were directed
towards the spot from which the two first
shots were fired.—His ample chest heaved
at the workings of the furies with-
in; his nostrils were relaxed and dilated
of alternately; and his giant frame was
bowed up in its full height. His ponder-
ous rifle was held by his right hand,
across the front of his body, ready to be
placed against his left shoulder, at a mo-
ment's notice.

As soon as Wetzel fired his last shot
and before the Mingo chief had time to
make a motion towards retreating, he
dropped his gun and leaped over the bank,
with the fury of a tiger, upon his long
sought enemy. The force with which he
sprang upon Old Cross-Fire laid the sa-
vage at full length upon the beach, with
one arm and a portion of his body buried
in the mire. Wetzel him self sunk to his

thighs in the mud, and found it impossible
to extricate himself. He had, however,
the advantage of the Indian; for the latter
was lying prostrate somewhat stunned by
the fall, and deprived, moreover, of one
his arms. The hunter, whose side was
now placed against the breast of the old
chief, finding that his antagonist was re-
viving, seized his knife, and was about to
plunge it into his heart, when the latter,
by a sweep of his long arm, encircled
Wetzel's body, and nearly crushed him
to death. The scout made several at-
tempts to use his knife, but the execrati-
ng pain he experienced from the iron hug
of the Mingo, paralyzed his powers of ac-
tion. At length, Old Cross-Fire made a
tremendous effort to turn himself; and in
doing so relaxed his arm in some measure,
which enabled Wetzel to inflict a deep
stab in the chief's side, from which
the red current of life spouted freely.

The savage uttered a yell of anguish, and
his arm fell powerless by his side. Wet-
zel continued to use his knife until the vi-
tal spark no longer animated the breast
of his victim. The Mingo Chief served
the purpose of the victorious hunter in ex-
tricating his legs from the mire.—He se-
cured the scalps of Old Cross-Fire and his
comrade—the bodies of the two Indians
first killed having sunk to the bottom of
the river.

It was now night, but the moon was up
and the stars shone brightly. Wetzel
went in search of Elliott and Rose. He
found the latter much revived, and the
youth was tenderly supporting her weak-
ened frame, and making her sensible of
the leading events we have related. She
expressed a wish to proceed home im-
mediately. Lewis after a short search found
the poney and its bridle. Rose was
placed in the saddle, and the party return-
ed in safety to the fort.

From the St. Louis Penitentiary.

American Antiquities—Ruins of Palenque.

We have been led into a most interest-
ing train of reflections by seeing it stated
in our eastern papers, that Mr. Stephens,
who has recently returned from a profes-
sional visit to the ruins of Palenque,
in Central America, is now delivering a
series of lectures upon these sublime re-
mains of former greatness—undoubtedly
one of the greatest objects of curiosity in
the world. Here, amid the desolation of
bigotry and barbarism, in whose arms this
magnificent country has slept for ages,
still remain indisputable evidences that
that most noble offspring of the Cauca-
sian branch of the human family, the
Phœnicians—"those builders of Babylon,
Tyre and Carthage,"—were at one time,
as they will be again, the masters of the
American as well as the European and
Asiatic continents. Connecting these
traces of former civilization, which abound
in Central and South America, with the
traditions of the Indian tribes—vague and
uncertain in all, save in agreement as to
the catastrophe—the mind is irresistibly
led to the conclusion that those boundless
forests and trackless prairies—those im-
mense rivers which run like arteries
through the two continents—are merely,
as it were, the work of yesterday—the
produce of some tremendous throes of
Nature, which swept in its feverish con-
volutions, a world of human intellect and
thought, and all their beautiful results,
into the remorseless ocean of oblivion!

Once, perchance, through these vast
wildernesses, where the wolf answering
to the Indian's yell, or the thunder-god
shivering his bolts among the giant for-
est-tops, are all that break the terrible
silence, the busy hum of civilization
woke the echoes of the air—graceful and
airy temples pierced the sky, and thronged
cities, bright with the grace of intellec-
tual culture, reared their walled sides.
Music and the dance—the bright creations
of the painter's rainbow-tinted mind—the
more than breathing and living forms
which spring forth from the marble be-
neath the sculptor's chisel, as water
gushed from the smitten rock—have all
been swept away in one general ruin,
and their creators returned to the Eternal
Ideal whence they emanated.

To carry the mind back to the contem-
plation of that period when what is now
the abode of civilization was nought but
a howling wilderness, and to picture the
scene in all its probable details, requires
no ordinary effort of the imagination;
but to go back yet another long lapse of
centuries, and to people it with all the
remains of human civilization, almost over-
tasks the weary fancy.

Researches into the past are always
interesting and useful. They enable
the conceptions of the mind, lead irresisti-
bly to the contemplation of the littleness
of humanity and the vast and illimitable
sublimity of nature. We wish we could
hear these lectures. Why cannot Mr.
Stephens pay us a visit? Even here he
might find new subjects of interest in his
study of the memories of by-gone times.